



*My friend asked me a question  
I could not readily answer.*

*"Why do people who lie and cheat  
Always seem to do better in life  
Than people who try to do the right thing?"*

*A philosophical answer would not do;  
She needed a practical response.*

*A theological answer would not do;  
She already knew what that was.*

*We examined a specific case that troubled her.*

*An employee was told to fake product test results.  
If he lied, people might be harmed.  
He could not lie so he was fired.  
Someone else faked the results;  
The product was made.  
The company is successful;  
The former employee is bitter and destitute.*

*Her question to me:  
"Why was evil rewarded and good punished?"*

*She wasn't satisfied with the standard answer:  
"The case isn't over yet;  
We don't know the final outcome."*

*It wasn't the final outcome she cared about.*

*"Why did doing the right thing  
Produce such bad results?"  
And more importantly,  
"Why does that always seem to be the case?"*

*I couldn't give her a quick response  
But her questions made me wonder.*

*Is apparent success true success?  
Is it incorrect for me to think  
That outward and inner success could be different?*

*Is it really true that the pain of doing right  
Ultimately prevails over the ease of doing wrong?*

*How long will it take for the fired employee to believe  
That what he did - in the end - was best for him?  
What if he never believes it was best?*

*I can listen to quick, standard answers:  
Doing the right thing is always right.  
Without suffering you can't experience true joy.  
Striving is the essence of life.  
You can only gain after you experience pain.  
Everything always works out in the end.*

*Yes, I know that getting to the end is what matters,  
But how I get there matters most.*

*I have learned  
The quick, standard answers are true  
But they don't ease the day-to-day struggle.  
They don't give me all the help I need to live my life,  
For living life is no simple matter.*

*A successful life  
Always incorporates good and evil,  
And in the struggle  
Sometimes evil seems to prevail.*

*But while I'm in the midst of the struggle  
I cannot say that evil has won.  
Only when I cross the bridge to the other side  
Of the conflict can I call the results.  
Only after I have experienced the entire event  
Can I say which side has won.*

*That takes time -  
Sometimes a lifetime.*

## Credits:

From *Life Is a Non-Stop Event*, a book of poetry by Carole Bos.

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